

**Amendments to the Abstract:**

A B S T R A C T

~~The invention relates to a~~ A spacer for putting into place on a tubular element. ~~According to the invention, the spacer comprises~~ includes firstly a sleeve of high-compressibility cellular material, ~~said~~ the sleeve presenting a wide slot extending over its entire length and defining a central passage that is essentially cylindrical- ~~and being~~ of diameter greater than the nominal diameter of the tubular element, and secondly a sheath of heat-shrink plastics material surrounding the split sleeve at least as far as the end edges thereof. The sheath is partially shrunk on the split sleeve firstly so as to hold ~~said~~ the split sleeve in the open state for putting the spacer into place on the tubular element, and secondly so as to be able subsequently to be heat-shrunk to clamp ~~said~~ the split sleeve and fix ~~said~~ the spacer in position.